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Arizona's state quarter released; draws raves

Thousands of people lined up at the state Capitol Monday to get their hands on the newly-minted Arizona commemorative quarter, the 48th in the 50-state collection.

Leslie and Henry Gibson flew in from Chicago just to get a \$10 roll of quarters. They were among people in a line that stretched about three blocks around the Capitol.

Of all the state quarters, Arizona's is the best, Leslie Gibson said.

Arizona's features the Grand Canyon and the saguaro cactus. Gov. Janet Napolitano picked the design from among five finalists recommended by a state commission that sifted through thousands of ideas submitted by state residents.

``They are pretty, they look a lot better than a lot of the other states... These are pretty. I like the cactus on them."

Her husband, an avid coin collector, said, ``I think this is the best design they've had. It's even better than Illinois, and I like my Illinois."

He added, ``I actually planned out this trip with the hope that I would be able to buy these quarters here today. I have a heck of a collection."

Arizona became the last of the lower 48 states to have its quarter released because they were done in order that the states joined the union.

Alaska and Hawaii will complete the statehood quarters collection by the end of this year.

State Treasurer Dean Martin said 500 million Arizona quarters will be put into circulation.

He said Arizona's quarter ``is one of the most unusual. Of course, we're the only state with one of the seven wonders of the world in it."

While people were allowed to buy \$10 rolls of the Arizona quarters during a ceremony at the Capitol today, each child under 18 at the ceremony received one quarter free.

by Jim Cross/KTAR